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A
DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

MAY 9, 1798.

BEING THE

Day of Fasting and Prayer

THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

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BY NATHANAEL EMMONS, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FRANKLIN.

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DISCOURS

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MAR 2 1792

THE

DAY OF HISTORY AND PASTOR

THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES

BY MATTHEW A. EMMONS, F.R.S.



ALBANY, N.Y.

AT THE PRESS OF

A DISCOURSE.

II. SAMUEL, XV. 31.

— *And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.*

THOUGH God condescended to frame a civil constitution for his own people, and to take the administration of it into his own hands; yet they soon became weary of his immediate superintendency, and requested him to grant them a King, that they might be like the nations round about them. In righteous displeasure, he granted their request; and anointed Saul to reign over them, who proved a severe scourge for their ingratitude and folly. But Saul's successor was a man after his own heart, whom he chose and appointed in mercy to Israel. Accordingly we read, "He chose David his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young, and brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." At this time, the people of God certainly enjoyed a government wisely constructed and faithfully administered; and yet they were guilty of the ingratitude and presumption of forming a conspiracy against it. This conspiracy was concerted and carried on, by the art and intrigue of one of the king's own sons. Absalom, who had a graceful appearance, and an insinuating address, stole away the hearts of the people from David his father. Having detached their affections from their rightful and faithful sovereign, he dispatched emissaries into all parts of the nation to prepare them for a general revolt. And the better to succeed in usurping the throne of Israel, he sent for Ahithophel his father's counsellor; and having gained him over to his party, it is said, "The conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom." All this was done, before the king had the least intimation of the traitor's design. At length, "There came a messenger to David, saying, the hearts

of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee : for we shall not else escape from Absalom : make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." Agreeably to this resolution, David with his family and friends, together with the Levites, immediately left the city; and, amidst the cries and lamentations of multitudes, passed over the brook Kidron. There they made a stand, and consulted together upon the most proper measures to be pursued, in order to save themselves and the kingdom from ruin. Having come to a determination, they moved forward, with slow and solemn step, towards mount Olivet, "weeping as they went up." In this distressing hour, "One told David, saying, Ahitophel is among the conspirators. And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness." This was the most pious and pertinent petition, that could have flowed from the heart and lips of David, on such an occasion. His own situation, and the situation of his kingdom, called aloud for the peculiar interposition of the Deity, to defeat the malignant counsels of the enemies of good government.—Hence every one will naturally draw this just conclusion :

That it is proper for a people, under a good government, to pray that God would defeat the designs of those, who are aiming to subvert it.

To illustrate this subject, I shall,

I. Briefly describe a good government.

II. Inquire who may be said to be aiming to subvert such a government. And

III. Show the propriety of praying, that the designs of such persons may be defeated.

I. I am briefly to describe a good government.

Some suppose, that one form of government is as good as another, provided it be equally well administered. If this opinion could be admitted, all observations upon this head would be entirely superseded.—

But there is no foundation to imagine, that the goodness or badness of any government solely depends upon its administration. It must be allowed, that the ultimate design of civil government is to RESTRAIN the corruptions of human nature. And since human nature is the same, at all times, and in all places; the same form of government, which is best for one nation is best for all nations, if they would only agree to adopt it. Hence politicians may arrive at as great perfection in the art of government, as in any other art, which is founded on the principles of human nature. As all mankind are naturally *selfish*; so it is necessary, that every individual, in every civil community, should be *constrained*, to act in consistency with *the general good* of the whole. That form of government, therefore, which is the best calculated to promote *the general good* of the people, is absolutely perfect in its kind. Were a set of *Rulers* to frame a constitution to suit themselves, they would be apt to frame it so as to promote their own interest, in opposition to the interest of the *People*. Were a particular *People* to frame a constitution to suit themselves, they would be apt to frame it so as to promote their own interest, in opposition to the interest of the *Rulers*. But were a number of enlightened and judicious statesmen to frame a constitution, in which they were never to be personally interested, they would aim to *combine* the interests of high and low, of rich and poor, of rulers and subjects; that is, they would mean to promote *the general good* of the whole community. This is the supreme and ultimate end, which ought to be proposed in every constitution of government. But since a government so constructed will necessarily cross the private interests of all individuals, it is further necessary, that it should provide *for its own support*, independently of the *People*. Just so far as any civil constitution allows the people to assist or control their *Rulers*; just so far it is weak, deficient, and contains the seeds of its own dissolution. For while the people are making laws, they are lawless; and while they are advising or directing their rulers,

they cease to be ruled. A civil constitution ought to resemble a good time-piece. A good clock, for instance, will constantly and regularly move of itself, if it be only wound up, from day to day, or from week to week. So a good constitution will support itself, without requiring any thing more of the people, than barely their setting it in motion, and choosing their own rulers, at a prescribed time, and in a prescribed manner. After a government is duly constructed, adopted, and organized, it must stand perpetually, unless it be subverted, either by the tyranny of the rulers, or the rebellion of the subjects, or the violence of foreign enemies. For, it is absurd to suppose, that any good constitution of government should make provision for its own destruction. It is the great design of a Constitution to draw a circle round both rulers and people, and to fix the bounds, within which both may lawfully move. Whilst it limits the power of rulers, it forms the mass of the people into one body, and forbids them any longer to act as detached individuals. Neither ruler nor subject, under a good constitution of government, has a right to take one step, out of his own sphere. So that if either ruler or subject lifts his hand against the constitution itself, or does any thing with a design to weaken or destroy it, he acts the part of a traitor, and deserves to be treated as such. I proceed,

II. To enquire who may be said to be aiming to overthrow a good government.

There is such a great diversity in the natural abilities, acquired knowledge, local situations, and temporal interests of mankind, that it is not to be expected they should be perfectly agreed in their political sentiments. Individuals, therefore, may be good subjects of a good government, though they should really think, that its constitution is not so perfect as it might be ; or that those in administration do not, in all cases, conduct public affairs so well as they might conduct them. But we may justly consider *those as aiming to subvert the government, who endeavor to alienate the affec-*

tions of the people from it. This was the method which Absalom pursued, in order to take the kingdom out of his father's hands into his own. He used every artifice to steal away the hearts of the people from their just and rightful sovereign. And yet he had the address to keep his ultimate design out of the view of the public, until he was fully persuaded, that he was able to accomplish it. The two hundred men, who escorted him to Hebron, where he actually seized the reins of government, "went in their simplicity, and knew not any thing" of his treasonable designs. These he had disclosed to none but his emissaries and friends, whom he had effectually secured in his favor. But it was true, all the while he was caressing the people, he carried a dagger in his heart, and was ultimately meditating to subvert his father's kingdom, and destroy both him and his friends. Korah, another traitor, employed the same kind of artifice and intrigue, to raise a mutiny in the congregation of Israel. He endeavored to *detach* the affections of the people from Moses and Aaron, their constituted leaders. He first inspired Dathan and Abiram, with a murmuring and seditious spirit. These persons instilled the same spirit into the minds of two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation. "And all these gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Having heard this complaint, Moses called upon them to come, and refer their cause to the divine decision. But they utterly refused, and boldly said, "We will not come up. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of the land which floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?" Thus they presumed to accuse Moses of aiming at absolute Monarchy, though he was the meekest man in the world, and had never, in a single instance, stretched his power beyond its

proper limits. But they knew that nothing could be more directly calculated to alienate the affections of the people from him, than this false and groundless insinuation. And if they could only gain this point, they did not doubt of overturning both their civil and religious constitutions, which was really their ultimate design. Though their views were base and detestable; yet their reasoning was just and conclusive. For those who are able to detach the affections of the people from their government, are able to overthrow it. Indeed, this is the way, and the only possible way, of overturning a good government, without the force of arms. Notwithstanding the means and the end, in this case, seem to be remote from each other; yet they are very naturally and certainly connected. Accordingly when we find any description of men insidiously endeavouring to alienate the affections of the people from their government, we have no room to doubt of their malevolent and traitorous designs. They are certainly seeking the power of bringing about a revolution of government; and should they attain that power, we may presume, they will employ it for that purpose.—It is not to be expected, that such persons will avow their object; but notwithstanding all their evasive language, their conduct declares them to be enemies of the government under which they live, and actually aiming to subvert it. It only remains to show,

III. The propriety of praying, that God would disconcert the counsels of such designing and dangerous men. And this will appear, if we consider,

1. That the subversion of a good government is one of the greatest calamities, that can fall upon a people. A good government is the security of every thing, which they hold most dear and valuable in life. It protects their persons, their properties, and all their civil and religious privileges. And if this foundation of their public safety and happiness should be taken away, they would be completely ruined. Hence David demands, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” It is the natural tendency of

revolutions in government, to involve mankind in confusion and misery. This is but too evident from the experience of all nations, in all ages of the world. But we need only turn our eyes to Europe, in order to see the dire effects of natural convulsions and revolutions. How many millions have perished, and are still perishing, by the violent subversions of government, in France and the neighboring States? Though Absalom was speedily defeated; yet his attempt to overthrow his father's kingdom filled Jerusalem with consternation and distress. Indeed, there is no temporal calamity, which any people have more reason to dread, than the subversion of a good government.—Whenever, therefore, they perceive themselves exposed to this tremendous calamity, whether by secret or open, whether by domestic or foreign enemies, they have abundant reason to call upon God, for his gracious and powerful interposition. And though they may not presume to dictate the Supreme Disposer of all events, as to the manner or means of their deliverance; yet they may humbly and fervently pray, that he would send confusion into the open and secret counsels of those who are seeking their ruin, and effectually blast all their subtil and malignant designs.

2. It is the prerogative of God to frustrate the most secret and destructive counsels of men. He knows their down sittings and up-risings. He understands their thoughts afar off. He looks on their hearts, and ponders all their purposes. They cannot conceive an evil thought, nor concert a malignant design, which he cannot perfectly penetrate and comprehend. He is able, therefore, to discover & disconcert the most subtil and secret counsels against the peace and prosperity of any people. This the inspired writers firmly believed and abundantly taught. Job says, “I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: who doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enter-

prize. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness : and the counsels of the froward are carried head-long." And again he says, "He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty." The Psalmist says, "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought ; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect." Isaiah represents the Church as exulting in the protection of God, and under his protection, bidding defiance to all the combinations and counsels of their enemies. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken to pieces : and give ear, all ye far countries, gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken to pieces.—Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought : speak the word, and it shall not stand : *for God is with us.*" And Solomon says, "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord." God has a supreme control over all the views and designs of men. He can either change or break any of their evil purposes. If they appoint, he can disappoint. If they concert schemes ; he can disconcert them. If they take counsel together ; he can bring their counsels to nought. Or if they resolve, he can cause them to change their resolutions ; for he has their hearts in his hand, and can turn them, like the rivers of water, whithersoever he pleaseth. Hence it highly becomes a people to pray, that God would confound the counsels of their enemies, and not suffer any weapon formed against them to prosper. And this will further appear, if we consider once more,

3. That God has often defeated the most destructive and deep-laid designs of men, in answer to prayer.—David entreated God to confound the designs of Ahitophel. "O Lord I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness." This prayer was graciously heard and answered. Ahitophel advised Absalom to allow him twelve thousand men, and permit him to pursue David immediately, and cut him off, while he was "weary and weak-handed." This advice pleased Absalom and all the Elders of Israel at first.

But Absalom was so infatuated, that he insisted upon consulting Hushai, who was waiting for an opportunity of drawing him into a snare. Accordingly, Hushai artfully opposed the advice of Ahitophel, and proposed to delay pursuing David, until Absalom could rally all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba, and, in his own person, lead them on to a triumphant victory over his father and his party. This foolish, romantic proposal struck Absalom and the men of Israel agreeably, who unitedly said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahitophel." The sage politician had too much pride to brook such treatment, and therefore "when he saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat himself home to his house, and put his household in order, and hanged himself." Thus in answer to David's prayer, "The Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." Sennacherib came against the defended cities of Judah and took them. And in order to save Jerusalem his capital, Hezekiah made a treaty with the king of Assyria, upon the most humiliating terms, and even robbed the Temple to fulfil it. But no sooner had he *purchased peace*, at the expence of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold; than the perfidious Assyrian, in open violation of his solemn compact, sent his general with a large army to destroy Jerusalem, which he had engaged to spare. And to accomplish this design, his general attempted to *detach the affections of the people* from Hezekiah, by addressing *them*, instead of *him*; and to heighten the insult, sent *him* a most impious letter. Upon receiving this letter, Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord, and prayed most devoutly, that God would confound the designs of his unrighteous and inhuman enemies. And in answer to his prayer, the Lord sent an angel into the camp of the Assyrians, who destroyed an hundred fourscore and five thousand men; which entirely defeated their designs against Jerusalem. Whilst Nehe-

miah was repairing the walls of Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, the enemies of Zion did all they could to frustrate his design. And it was in answer to prayer, that their counsels and combinations were confounded. This is the instructive account. "It came to pass, that when Sanballet and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come, and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Nevertheless *we made our prayer unto our God.*" Their prayer was heard. "For it came to pass, says Nehemiah, that when our enemies heard that *it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsels to nought*, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one to his work." The Bible gives us another remarkable instance of God's confounding a deep-laid plot against his people, in answer to prayer. Haman laid a plan to destroy all the Jews at one stroke. And he succeeded in carrying on his design until he was just ready to accomplish his horrid purpose. But in answer to the fastings and prayers of Mordecai and other pious Jews, God remarkably interposed, and completely destroyed Haman, and frustrated all his designs. These, and a l other instances of the same kind, which are recorded in Scripture, clearly warrant, and abundantly encourage a people to pray, that God would disconcert the counsels of those, who are seeking to subvert their government, and involve them in national ruin.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. It appears from the political observations, which have been made in this discourse, that we enjoy the best kind of civil government. The Framers of our Federal Constitution proceeded upon the best political principle, that of the *general good* of the People. They took men just where Providence had placed them, and treated them according to those distinctions, which the Author of nature had made among them. They found some rich and others poor ; some high and others

low ; some more and others less discerning ; some more and others less improved ; some formed to govern and others to be governed : and they made it their main object, to give these various classes of men their various dues ; and to consolidate all their various interests into one common, general, national Interest. This appears from the face of the Federal Constitution, which neither gives any peculiar privilege to one set of men, nor takes away any peculiar privilege from another. We know, that it grants no exclusive right to the rich, to entail their riches ; nor to the honorable, to entail their honors. And, on the other hand, we know, that it deprives no man of his natural right, to rise from poverty to wealth ; from low to high life ; from a private to a public station ; and from one public station to another. It leaves all the avenues to honor, wealth and power entirely open to all classes of men, who have a fair opportunity to rise or sink, according to their mental abilities, their personal conduct, and the public opinion. Such is the natural tendency of our government, to promote the *general good* of the People.

And it must be farther observed, that it is so constructed, as not only to promote the *general good* of the People, but to *support itself* independently of *their* immediate interposition. The People have nothing to do, in the affairs of government, but merely to choose the Presidents, the Senators, and the Representatives, in a regular and constitutional manner. When these Rulers are chosen, it is their proper business to check and control each other, so as to support the government, which they are authorized to administer. And it appears from their past conduct, that they have ably and faithfully performed this part of their duty.— There have been vigorous struggles between the various Branches of the Federal Legislature, to encroach upon each other, and to warp our excellent Constitution ; but these struggles have happily served to strengthen, rather than weaken the general government. When the House grasped at power, and en-

deavoured to curtail the prerogatives of the President and of the Senate; those two branches maintained their rights, and controlled the aspiring views of the popular demagogues in the House. The speeches made in the Federal Legislature, in defence of our excellent Constitution, would, in point of learning, eloquence and patriotism, do honor to the greatest statesmen of ancient Greece or Rome. The support of government cannot be placed in safer hands, than those of our rulers. They are invested with proper power, possessed of proper information, and placed in a proper situation, to watch and control each other, in the administration of government. But the people at large are deficient, in all these respects, to look over the shoulders of their Rulers, and direct, or control them in their public conduct. Hence our Federal constitution has happily furnished the Three Branches of the Legislature, with those Checks and Balances, which are directly suited to support the general government, without the aid of secret Clubs, exclusive Patriots, or popular Conventions. Whether we view our government, in its theory, or in its operation, it appears to be the best that ever was framed by the art of man. It is every way calculated to promote the *general good* of the People, and has in every respect, completely answered this most important and desirable end. No nation ever increased faster, in numbers, in wealth, in power, in mental improvements, and in all the arts of living, than we have done, under the benign influence of our excellent government.

2. It appears from what has been said, that good government equally tends to restrain men from tyranny and levellism. There is a natural propensity in all mankind, to run into one or the other of these political evils. The higher classes of men are more inclined to tyranny, and the lower classes of men are more inclined to levellism. But a government calculated to promote the general good of the people, naturally tends to prevent the higher classes of citizens from encroaching upon the lower, and the lower from en-

croaching upon the higher, by protecting all classes equally in the enjoyment of their natural rights. It must be allowed, that the higher order of the people ought not to deprive the lower order of their ease, liberty, or property; and that the lower order ought not to deprive the higher order of their honor, wealth, or influence. The rich have as good a right as the poor, to be protected in the full enjoyment of their natural advantages. This is the dictate of Scripture as well as of reason. It was a precept of the law of Moses, "Thou shalt not countenance a *poor man* in his cause." Poor men often wish to have more than their due; and their poverty often pleads with Judges to grant them more than their due. But justice requires the Judge to be as tender of the rich man's interest, as of that of the poor man's. And the Bible enforces this dictate of justice. "Thou shalt *not respect* the person of the *poor*, nor *honor* the person of the *mighty*." Hence good government, which is founded upon the principles of Scripture and reason, is the only possible medium between tyranny and levellism, and equally tends to restrain both. A good government grants no exclusive privileges to the rich and great, and of course restrains them from tyrannizing over the lower classes of the people. And, on the other hand, a good government grants no liberty to the lower classes of the people, to bring down the rich and great to their own level. And so long as a government effectually guards its subjects from too great Equality, and from too great *Inequality*, it promotes and secures that perfect Liberty, to which all have a just and equal claim. Many seem to imagine, that there cannot be perfect liberty without perfect equality, or that liberty and equality are inseparably connected. But this political sentiment is one of the most wild and absurd, that ever entered into the mind of man. When Providence has given men unequal abilities, unequal advantages, and unequal possessions, it is a violation of the laws of nature and religion, to reduce them all to a level. It is, therefore, the peculiar excellence of good govern-

ment, to support *natural*, and to suppress *unnatural* distinctions among men, by giving property a free circulation through the hands of all classes of people. So long as rich men have a right to squander away their property, and poor men have a right to acquire it, it is impossible for wealth to be so unequally enjoyed, as to endanger the freedom of the people. That government, therefore, which allows rich men to become poor, and poor men to become rich : and which treats poor men according to their poverty, and rich men according to their wealth, must necessarily draw a just line between tyranny and levellism, and preserve that political liberty, which directly tends to promote the peace, harmony, and prosperity of every civil community. Hence,

3. A good government is a proper Test of men's political principles. All men pretend to like a good government, though they widely differ in their political sentiments. But notwithstanding all the party names, which men bestow upon one another, on account of their political opinions ; they may all be properly ranked under the three following classes ; namely, the friends of Tyranny ; the friends of Anarchy ; and the friends of Good Government. The first class wish for a government, which grants exclusive rights and hereditary honors and distinctions. They want to rise above their fellow men, by unjust means, and to have it in their power to trample upon the great mass of the people, with impunity. The second class wish for a government, (if it may be called a government,) which levels all distinctions, counteracts the laws of nature, and allows them to equal those, whose fortunes, abilities and characters are all superior to their own. The third class wish for a government, which is founded in justice, and neither increases the advantages of one part of the people, nor diminishes the advantages of another ; but protects the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the ruler and the subject, in the full enjoyment of the various blessings, which Providence has bestowed upon them.

Now, it is easy to see, that men of this last description will be entirely satisfied with a good government, when they actually enjoy it; because it actually answers all the purposes, which they desire a government to answer. If, therefore, the government of these United States be a good government, as we have shown, then all who understandingly approve of it, and are satisfied with it, are friends to good government; but on the other hand, all who dislike and oppose it, are either the friends of tyranny, or the friends of anarchy. It is impossible for those who wish to be tyrants, to like our government, because it is directly calculated to restrain tyranny; and it is equally impossible for those who wish for anarchy or levellism, to like our government, because it equally tends to restrain disorganizers and levellers. All the objections which have ever been made against the first principles of the Federal government, have been founded upon either the principles of tyranny, or the principles of levellism. Hence we have reason to expect, that all, who persevere in opposing the Federal government, will finally appear to be either tyrants, or levellers, in principle. Men of good political principles may be led astray by artful and designing demagogues, to dislike our government for a while; but when the principles of it are clearly displayed, and the conduct of the rulers founded upon those principles is fully developed, they will cordially unite with its present friends, in admiring and supporting it. It is probable, the time is not far distant, when party names must all subside, and all the people of America be divided into friends or enemies of good government, according as their political principles agree, or disagree with the standard of our excellent Constitution.

4. We learn from what has been said, that our government is equally balanced between tyranny and anarchy. Every good government is a medium between these two extremes. For, it is calculated to promote the general good, and to support itself independently of

the People. These two properties of a government properly balance it, and keep it from leaning towards tyranny on the one hand, and anarchy on the other. But since no civil constitution framed by man, is exactly balanced between a too rigid and a too lax government, there is reason to apprehend, that every civil constitution does naturally incline more towards one, than the other of these extremes. When the Federal Constitution was first established, we had nothing to guide our conjectures concerning its ultimate tendency but theory, which often misleads the greatest connoisseurs in politics. Both before and since it began to operate, many have been divided in their opinions respecting it. Some hoped and expected, that it would gradually grow stronger and stronger, and incline more and more towards monarchy; whilst others hoped and expected, that it would grow weaker and weaker, and gradually sink down into mere democracy or levellism. Both those parties had some ground for their different hopes and expectations. The Federal Constitution does give Rulers larger powers and larger salaries, than the former State constitutions did, and thereby enables those in the administration of government, to enforce their laws with greater energy and effect. This seems to favor monarchy. For the more power men have, the more they commonly want, and endeavor to obtain. But it is to be considered, that the Federal Constitution has made all the rulers elective, in a regular and rapid rotation, which gives the people sufficient power to check their ambitious and tyrannical views. Besides, the Constitution has prohibited both rulers and subjects from amassing exorbitant wealth, which has the greatest tendency to warp a civil constitution. Neither a ruler, nor a subject, can do much towards introducing arbitrary power, without having wealth sufficient to create *dependents*. But it is extremely difficult for either a ruler, or a subject, under our government, to make dependents, by public or private property. The ruler is highly responsible for his disposal of public property, and, there-

fore, is under no great temptation to employ it in making dependents. And the subject is not allowed to entail his inheritance upon his heirs from generation to generation ; which must prevent any person or family from amassing that exorbitant wealth, which is prejudicial to civil liberty. Hence our constitution seems to be sufficiently guarded against monarchy.— But, it must be allowed, that it is not so well guarded against democracy or levellism. The People have a right to choose all their own rulers very frequently, and to choose their Representatives every other year. These are the most numerous branch of government, and the most apt to imbibe the sentiments of the people, who are always fond of lessening the powers and prerogatives of their Rulers. The Representatives, therefore, will naturally incline to favor popular prejudices, and to encroach upon the other branches of the Legislature. This natural conjecture is already confirmed by the operation, as well as theory of our government. The House have actually shown, in the course of their public debates, a strong inclination to lessen the legal prerogatives of the President and Senate. Nor is this all. The Constitution implicitly allows the People to hold meetings or Conventions, for the very purpose of inspecting and influencing the administration of government. This liberty of the people has already become alarming, and loudly proclaims that the Federal Constitution leans more towards democracy, than monarchy. Is there one intelligent man in America, who seriously believes, that it is easier to turn our government into a monarchy, than into a democracy ? Actions speak louder than words. And the actions of our enemies declare, that they really believe it is much easier to introduce democracy, than monarchy, into these United States. We may all now know, which is the weakest side of our government ; and which we ought to take the most care to guard against its enemies.

5. If the subverters of government have been justly described ; then we have reason to conclude, that we

are now exposed to the arts and intrigues of such dangerous men. It is certain, that some among ourselves have employed their tongues and their pens, to alienate the affections of the People from the government. But whether we are more in danger from men of our own, than from men of a foreign nation, may admit of a doubt. We know that the French Republic have long been hostile to our civil Constitution, which has been such a happy source of our national peace and prosperity. Their politicians have condemned its first principles, and represented it as calculated to destroy all civil liberty, and to introduce absolute despotism. Their ambassadors, consuls, and other emissaries, have industriously endeavored to sow the seeds of sedition among the People, and to alienate their affections from their able and faithful Rulers. They have either written, or caused to be written, and circulated through licentious presses, the most false and inflammatory pieces, to reproach those in administration, and render them universally odious and contemptible. They have originated self-created secret societies, in order to embarrass and stop the wheels of government. They have treated our Envoys Extraordinary with intolerable neglect, and exhausted all their art and intrigue, to betray them into measures, at once, destructive of our national honor, interest and independence. And after they have done all this, they not only boast of detaching our affections from our government, but threaten us with the weight of their vengeance, if we presume to support it. Surely these facts are sufficient to convince every candid, impartial man in America, that the French nation, and all who approve of their measures, are really aiming to subvert our government, and involve us in national ruin. It is time, therefore, for all classes of people to open their eyes, and attend to the present alarming situation of public affairs.

6. This discourse naturally suggests various measures, which are proper to be used, in support of our excellent Constitution against the arts and intrigues of foreign and domestic enemies. Since these artful and

designing men pretend, that our government is bad, it is certainly proper, in the first place, to examine it for ourselves. The Federal Constitution will bear examination. It was framed by men of great abilities and political knowledge. It was, at first, submitted to the free and full discussion of the people. It is now in their hands, and they may examine it as deliberately and critically as they please. The best means of information upon the subject, are within their reach.— They may consult either men, or books, or both. But, until they have properly informed themselves, it is extremely absurd to hearken to any complaints, which are so freely thrown out against the national government, by its foreign and domestic enemies. If people in general would only examine the first principles and constituent parts of the Federal government, with care and candor, we presume, they would be fully convinced, that no material or essential alteration could be made in it, without destroying its natural tendency, to promote our national freedom and happiness. Could we, as a people, only be understandingly and heartily united in our attachment to our own government, it would strike a fatal stroke to the hopes and exertions of foreign and domestic disorganizers. Let us, therefore, use every proper method, to receive and diffuse just ideas of government, and, if possible, effect a general harmony in political sentiments. If the friends of our Constitution would labor as much to unite the people, as some do to disunite them, we might expect to see, very soon, one political opinion running through all the United States, and bidding defiance to those, who wish to divide and destroy them.

It is further necessary, in order to support our government, to place a proper confidence in those who administer it. They are the men in whom the majority of the nation is united, and in whom the wisdom of the nation is concentrated. All our national wisdom is collected in our national Council. The wisdom of individuals cannot operate to any advantage, only as it is conveyed to the Head of the body

politic. To the head of our nation we ought to look up, with confidence, for wisdom and direction. If our supreme rulers have not wisdom enough to manage the national concerns, the nation must perish for lack of knowledge. As individuals, we have no wisdom nor power to govern or defend ourselves. This our enemies know, and, therefore, they use so much art and sophistry, to divide our counsels, and lead us to withdraw our confidence from those, who alone can devise and carry into effect the means of our safety and happiness. It is of peculiar importance, at this day, to turn a deaf ear to the false and flattering language of the Absaloms, who are endeavoring to steal away our affections; and to place a just confidence in the wisdom and integrity of those whom we have freely chosen to govern us. We have men of tried wisdom and integrity at the helm of government, in whom we have abundant reason to confide. There is not, perhaps, a man in the world who is superior to the President of these United States, in political wisdom, integrity and experience. If we cannot confide in him in the discharge of *constitutional* duties, in whom can we confide? And if we presume to act in concert with his secret and avowed enemies, what can we expect, but to fall into *their* power, and to experience *their tender mercy*, which has proved to be the *extreme of cruelty* to millions of their deluded votaries?

But since all second causes are under the control of the supreme first Cause, it is our indispensable duty to place our supreme and ultimate dependence upon him. For after all our endeavors to disconcert the counsels of our enemies, it is in the power of the Supreme Disposer of all events, to succeed, or blast our united efforts. We ought, therefore, most sincerely and perseveringly to implore the blessing of God upon all our public and private exertions, to preserve our national freedom and happiness. He can either dispose our enemies to change their ambitious, sanguinary counsels, or turn them into foolishness.

There are weighty considerations, which urge us to

pursue these measures, with vigor and perseverance.—
 Let us consider, that if we once loose our present Con-
 stitution, by the secret arts or open violence of our en-
 emies, they will never suffer us to choose another.—
 I know they promise to give us a better ; and, like Ab-
 salom, flatter us with the phantom of *Liberty and E-*
quality. But let us beware of their arts, which have
 proved so fatal to others. How have they treated
 those nations, whom they have decoyed and conquer-
 ed ? Have they given them Liberty and Equality ? No,
 they have given them nothing but Equality in pover-
 ty, misery, and slavery. The French are ignorant of
 good government. They never enjoyed this invalu-
 able blessing. They have experienced only tyranny,
 democracy, and anarchy. They are, notwithstanding
 their boasted refinement, mere novices in politics.—
 They could not, if they would, give themselves, or
 any other nation, a free and efficient government. It
 is the height of folly in Americans, who have always
 enjoyed the largest portion of civil Liberty, to rely
 upon any European nation, and especially upon the
 French, to teach them how to govern themselves.—
 They have yet to learn of us, that “ Liberty with Or-
 der,” is the perfection of civil policy.

In this connection, let us also reflect upon the peace
 and prosperity, which we have enjoyed under our pre-
 sent form and administration of government. Our
 national happiness has exceeded our most sanguine
 hopes and expectations. This all parties have been
 constrained to acknowledge. And while the friends
 of government have employed this as an argument in
 its favor, its enemies have been reduced to the wretch-
 ed necessity of employing it as an objection against it.
 They tell us, we are too prosperous. We are growing
 rich and great too fast. We are in danger of being
 ruined by our prosperity. This is undoubtedly true.
 But who can imagine, that this is an argument against
 the excellency of our government ? It was designed to
 raise our national prosperity as high as possible. And
 since it confessedly answers this noble and important

purpose, we are under peculiar obligations to support it, and, if possible, transmit it to the latest posterity. We shall be guilty of the basest ingratitude to God, and to those whom he raised up to give us our admirable Constitution, if we entertain a thought of bartering it away for the Utopian scheme of Liberty and Equality. This is not a harmless, but a fatal delusion. The bare experiment of it has cost the liberty and lives of millions. If we have the least spark of national wisdom or gratitude, we shall unite our efforts to preserve the grand palladium of our national happiness. And if we only do this, we have great reason to hope for success.

For, we ought to consider, in the last place, that this is Emmanuel's land, in which he has planted his Church, and maintained his cause, by a series of signal interpositions. If we act up to our profession and obligation as a religious people, we may humbly hope, that the God, whom we worship, will defeat the impious and cruel designs of our infidel enemies, who have denied his existence and providence, and trampled upon his word and all his sacred institutions. It is a token for good, that our first Magistrate has called upon us, this day, to humble ourselves before God, and unitedly implore his mercy. If we rend our hearts and not our garments ; if we sincerely repent and reform, we may safely confide in God for pardon and deliverance, according to the established rule of his conduct towards a penitent and reformed people.—
 “ At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it : If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, *turn from their evil*, I will *repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*”—AMEN.

